



Childhood Connections

February 6, 2024

Roads to Success

Throughout 2024, the Office of Childhood (OOC) will share “Roads to Success,” a collection of stories from professionals working in childhood programs, such as home visiting, early intervention, child care, Head Start, preschool, and afterschool. There are many roads to success, but each story is as unique as the professional who is sharing it. These stories are also available at the bottom of the [Early Connections webpage](#).



Photo Credit: Robin Galloway

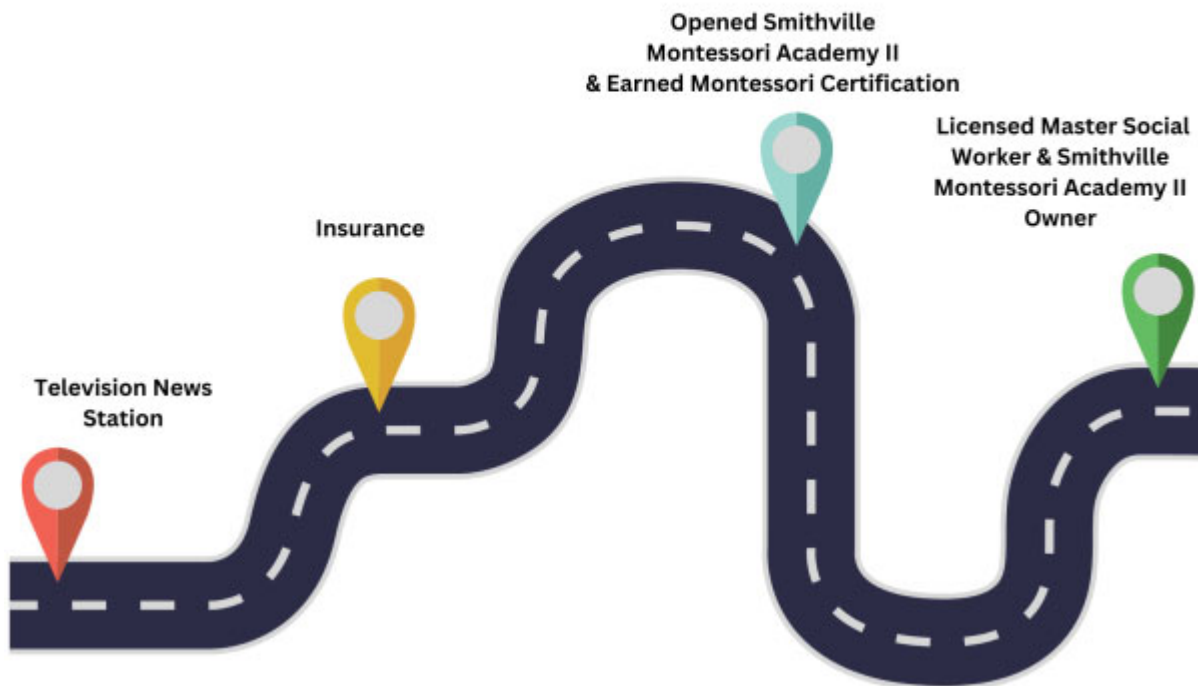
This month’s “Road to Success” focuses on Robin Galloway from Smithville, MO. Robin owns Smithville Montessori Academy II. She graduated from Missouri State University with an undergraduate degree in communications and worked at a news station before entering the insurance field. After having her children, Robin pursued a Montessori certification through the American Montessori Society. Robin opened Smithville Montessori Academy II in 2002 serving infants through kindergarten age children.

Robin worked for about 13 years and began to recognize children and families needed more support in the early years. So, she enrolled at the University of Missouri-Kansas City for her master’s in social work and graduated in 2018 as a Licensed Master Social Worker. Robin can now provide children and families ethical therapeutic support with her multifaceted background.

Later, Robin enrolled in the birth to three, infant/toddler certification through the Center for Guided Studies. This course is an 18-month course, focusing on birth to three child development, following the Montessori method of education Robin is working through the program accreditation process with the International Montessori Council.

Robin shared, “There are different alternatives to teaching in early childhood. If you are really getting the training and education to work with the children, you do not have to narrow yourself to just one area. The field has dramatically changed. Quality education is where it is at!”

Here is what Robin's road to success looks like!



NEW! Missouri Family Resources Webpage and Mobile App are Now Available



Missouri Family Resources is a new statewide resource webpage and mobile app for professionals and families to access and share local early childhood information and services.

Missouri Family Resources is easy and intuitive to use. It houses a variety of local resources for families with young children, is accessible 24/7, and is completely free. Searches can be done by program name, eligibility criteria, or geographic location then



UPDATE! Office of Childhood Contact Information

Did you know OOC publishes a printable [Contact Us](#) document that includes the phone numbers and email addresses for every program administered by OOC?

There is also an accompanying [What We Do webpage](#) that lists the section and team leaders for OOC programs.

Both of these pages were recently updated

printed or easily shared via text message, email, and social media.

Learn about key features of Missouri Family Resources and how resources will stay up-to-date, [in this information flyer](#).

Visit FamilyResources.mo.gov or download the Missouri Family Resources app from the Apple App Store.

NEW! Early Childhood Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships for staff working in child care programs are available in the St. Louis, Kansas City, Rolla, and Southwest areas of the state. Contact a program near you for more information about how to earn a Child Development Associate (CDA) while working in the child care industry.

- **In the St. Louis area:** contact YWCA Metro St. Louis' Early Education Program. Call 314-427-4940 for more information.
- **In the Kansas City area:** contact Full Employment Council (FEC). Call 816-471-2330 for more information.
- **In the Rolla area:** contact Missouri S&T Child Development Center. Call 573-341-4120 for more information.
- **In the Southwest area:** contact Workforce Investment Board of Southwest Missouri. Call 417-625-3613 for more information.

OPEN! 2024 OOC Annual Stakeholder Survey

As an important stakeholder in Missouri's Early Care and Education system, your feedback helps guide the state's actions. Your feedback assists in evaluating the outcomes of the Preschool Development B-5 grant, as well as progress on DESE's strategic plan for Missouri's childhood system.

[This five-minute survey](#) asks questions about the early care and education system in Missouri. Please complete the survey by March 26, 2024.

NEW! State Regulations Implementing Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Revised regulations for the First Steps program took effect on January 30, 2024.

with current contact information.

OPEN! 2024 Market Rate Survey (MRS)

Every three years the state conducts an MRS to collect information on the current rates Missouri child care providers charge for child care services.

This survey will also collect information about the actual cost of providing child care. The deadline to complete the survey is March 31, 2024.

Last week, all contracted and licensed child care providers received a link to complete the MRS. Providers needing assistance with the survey can contact MOMRS24@pcgus.com or call 888-316-7169.

NEW! Childhood Strategic Plan Update

Childhood strategic plan documents including a 2023 progress report, 2023 goal one measures, and 2024 action items were recently added to the OOC page.

View the documents on the childhood strategic plan section of the [Needs Assessment, Strategic Planning, and Grant Reporting webpage](#).

NEW! Steps to Success Webinar Series

The revisions involved removal of language related to atypical development and revision of language related to the dates for summer third birthdays which were required by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education, and do not change current practice.

As a reminder, public comment for these revisions was accepted through August 2, 2023, and OOC did not receive any comments on the revisions.

To view the new Part C State plan, visit: [First Steps State Plan Part C](#).

NEW! Kindergarten Entry Assessment Reports

The Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) helps inform whether children are ready for school. The KEA is administered by kindergarten teachers within the first few weeks of starting school. There are [three approved tools](#) that schools can use and OOC helps pay for the cost of one: the Kindergarten Observation Form (KOF). The results from the 2023 KOF that was administered in Fall 2023 are [available here](#).

Results will show schools assessed over 42,000 kindergarteners using the KOF and about 57 percent of those assessed were ready for school.

Last week, the results from schools using all three approved tools in school years 2022-23 and 2023-24 were added to [public dashboard](#) of the Early Childhood Integrated Data System under Kindergarten Entry Assessment.

Visit the [OOC webpage](#) to learn more about KEA.

NEW! Governor Parson Delivers the State of the State Address

This series of First Steps trainings was developed for parents of children, birth to age 3. The training series helps parents understand the First Steps program, teach them effective communication and advocacy skills, and helps them prepare for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services in the school district.

[Visit the MPACT Early Childhood Program and Training webpage](#) to register for these free on-demand trainings.

NEW! Document on Transition from First Steps to Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)

Staff from the DESE Offices of Childhood and Special Education developed a new Myth of the Month document about [Transition from First Steps to ECSE](#). The document clarifies several myths regarding transition to ECSE, including attending transition meetings, child find responsibilities, and evaluation timelines.

COMING SOON! Rule Changes For Licensed Group Home and Centers

Rule changes for licensed group home and centers went into effect January 30, 2024. A recording of the provider



In his State of the State address on January 24, 2024, Governor Mike Parson highlighted the importance of affordable quality child care as part of a strong workforce in Missouri and proposed a \$52 million investment in the state's child care subsidy program.

Governor Parson recognized Katherine Godier and her son Theo who attends the Mineral Area College (MAC) [early learning program](#) in Park Hills, MO. Having on-campus child care at MAC helps allow parents to work or pursue their education/training. Attending alongside Katherine and Theo was MAC Program Director Jennifer Sikes.

NEW! Comment Period Open for Proposed Rule

OOC has filed the proposed rule 5 CSR 25-100.340 Early Childhood Education Standards for state-funded prekindergarten education programs with the Secretary of State's office and the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules. The proposed rule was published in the January 16, 2024, edition of the [Missouri Register](#). A draft of the rule, as filed, is currently posted on this [OOC webpage](#).

A link to a survey where you can submit comments on the proposed rule is also provided on the [OOC webpage](#). The survey for public comments is open through February 14, 2024.

OPEN! Retention of Child Care Staff and Enhancement Grants

We are pleased to announce there are two new relief grants available to child care providers in Missouri.

training that was held the week of January 15, 2024, and an FAQ document will be available on the [Rules & Laws tab of the Child Care webpage](#) by February 15, 2024.

REMINDER! 40th Anniversary of Parents as Teachers

2024 marks the 40th anniversary of Parents as Teachers (PAT).

Throughout the year Patents as Teachers National Center (PATNC) will celebrate this milestone with activities, including PAT Day at the Ballpark (May 7, 2024) and the International Conference in San Diego (October 14-17, 2024).

As a kick-off, PATNC awarded \$1.75 million in challenge grants to affiliates across the country to help Invest in the Power of Families. Ferguson-Florissant School District received a grant for a partnership with PBS.

[Learn more about the challenge grants on the PATNC webpage.](#)

ANNOUNCEMENT! Children's Trust Fund Implements Home Visiting Coordinated Referral & Intake System (CRIS)

The statewide CRIS is a web-based platform that makes it easy to refer a family to home visiting

- Retention grants support child care staff members. [Apply here!](#) Application closes March 31, 2024.
- Enhancement grants support child care programs. [Apply here!](#) Application closes May 31, 2024.

Contact ChildCareRelief@dese.mo.gov or call 573-415-8951, extension 1, if you have questions about your application or payment.

UPDATE! 2024 Conference on the Young Years Registration Open



Registration is open for the 51st Annual Conference on the Young Years (CYY), which will be held March 7-9, 2024, at the Tan-Tar-A Conference Center in Osage Beach, Missouri.

Learn more about the conference and register to attend on the [CYY webpage](#).

Registration closes February 22, 2024.

UPDATE! Dolly Parton's Imagination Library 2024 Book List is Now Available



services anywhere in the state through five regional referral networks. Each regional referral network is managed by a state-funded home visiting collective impact site and includes a variety of home visiting programs and models.

[View the CRIS flyer for more information.](#)

REMINDER! Check Toy Recalls After the Holidays

The CPSC Recall App is a stand-alone mobile app that enables the public to search for product recalls.

Download the app at the [CPSC data webpage](#). A list of CPSC recalls is also available on the [OOC Product Recalls webpage](#).

UPDATE! Center Director & Group Home Provider Process

OOC recently updated the [Center Director & Group Home Provider Process webpage](#) to include more information about the certification and approval process.

The resources tab includes the new [Transcript Review Request Form](#). This form can be used when a director applicant wants to request that their transcripts on file for Director Certification be entered into the Missouri

The Dollywood Foundation has announced their 2024 Book list! You can find the list on the [United States Book List - Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#). Books are distributed to children based on the year they are born, this ensures each child receives an age-appropriate book. The year a child was born determines the group of books they will receive.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is available to children birth to age 5 in every zip code in Missouri. Parents can register their children to receive one free book per month at no cost to families.

Parents, visit www.imaginationlibrary.com and click "Check Availability" to sign up today!

REMINDER! Keep Up-To-Date On Your Facility Records

For Licensed Providers, child care rules require certain facility records to be kept current and on file. This includes staff records, child records, and owner or building specific records. While OOC implemented procedures for compliance monitoring inspections to not include file reviews by the Compliance Inspector, there may be situations that require them to review records.

Situations that will require a review of records include:

- A safe sleep violation. When observed, a Compliance Inspector will review safe sleep trainings for staff as well as a completed orientation record.
- A medication being administered from a bottle that isn't labeled. When observed, a Compliance Inspector will view a child's record and the medicine cabinet.
- A child being served an alternate fruit during lunch and staff stating it is due to a food allergy. When observed, a Compliance Inspector will view the child's record for an individualized plan for specialized care from a professionally qualified source.

We encourage you to still keep your records up-to-date at all times. If you have any questions about facility records, please contact your Compliance Inspector or regional office.

UPDATE! Child Care Data System

Professional Development (MOPD) system.

REMINDER! DESE, Office of Childhood Home Visiting

The Home Visiting programs and Safe Cribs for Missouri Program within OOC provide voluntary, high quality, early childhood home visiting services and access to other resources free of charge to Missouri residents.

Home visiting strives to provide the opportunity for children to grow up healthy, safe, successful learners, and for their families to have the ability to be active participants in this journey.

Learn more at the OOC [Home Visiting webpage](#).

UPDATE! Childhood Community Leaders Information

The [childhood community leaders webpage](#) was recently updated with maps, contact information, and the local early childhood plan for each region. Childhood community leaders have developed local strategic plans to identify goals and action steps to improve the early childhood landscape in their communities.

OOC recently launched the new child care data system for families and providers to have a web-based system to enter and view their information for child care subsidy. We are monitoring the number of existing families and providers who were in the DESE subsidy program prior to December 15, 2023, to determine who has connected their account in the new system. We need your help!

[Visit Early Connections to view the updated webpages.](#)

- Only 48% of existing families have connected their account. Families need to complete the activities in [this quick steps document for Parents](#) or [this Parent training video](#) (8 minutes) to connect their subsidy account.
- Only 38% of existing subsidy providers have connected their account. Providers need to complete the activities in [this quick steps document for Providers](#) or [this Provider training video](#) (9 minutes) to connect their subsidy account.

For assistance with using the new child care data system, contact the Call Center at 573-415-8605 and select extension 1 for parents and extension 2 for providers.

REMINDER! Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) System

All staff/caregivers working in a child care program that is licensed or contracted with the DESE subsidy program are required to track their training in the MOPD System. To see training records, each **user** must:

- Create an account in the MOPD System.
 - If you had an MOPD ID in the old system, this will connect you to your prior training records.
 - If you are new to MOPD, this will create a new MOPD ID.
- Apply for a registry profile membership. There is no fee for the membership.
- Add their employment record. The **employer** must:
 - Connect their DVN to create an organization in the MOPD system.
 - Verify the user's employment in the organization.

[For more information on how to use the system, visit the MOPD webpage.](#)

Questions? Contact mopd@dese.mo.gov.

Spotlight on Success

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships in order to strengthen and coordinate childhood programs.



Youth In Need's Early Learning Program and the Francis Howell School District (FHSD) partnered to provide early childhood education in two classrooms, serving up to 30 children ages 3 to 5-years-old at Central Elementary and Harvest Ridge Elementary Schools in St. Charles County.

A 2022 community needs assessment identified that a large population of FHSD early childhood-age children were not being served. One reason was because of families' inability to afford the existing fee-based preschool services within the district. The solution was the implementation of a free preschool program.

Children in the preschool program are dually enrolled in FHSD's and Youth In Need's Head Start program. Sharing educational information, the two organizations support children's development, school readiness, and transitions into kindergarten. Youth In Need implemented Creative Curriculum, a DESE-approved curriculum, and the Conscious Discipline Program, as well as integrated positive behavior support language into the preschool program.

All children receive developmental screenings and ongoing assessment. One of the most impactful aspects of this partnership has been the ability to include bilingual educators to meet the needs of the diverse population within the district. "We have been able to serve children within this district that would not have had the opportunity to attend preschool," said Sarah Briddell, Director of Operations, Youth In Need's Early Learning Programs. "This school year is our first full year within the district, we are excited to continue this partnership as we work together to give children a head start".

UPDATE! Preschool Development Grant



The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) provides funding over three years to coordinate a more effective, high-quality early childhood system that better prepares Missouri children for success.

Each month, the OOC hosts a live webinar to provide updates and information about the PDG B-5 to stakeholders. A [recording](#) and the [PowerPoint slides](#) from the January 2024 webinar are available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information. You can view archived webinars here:

- [November 2023](#)
- [October 2023](#)
- [September 2023](#)

- [August 2023](#)
- [July 2023](#)
- [June 2023](#)

The [PDG B-5 dashboard](#) is also updated monthly. This dashboard provides an at-a-glance look at priority areas, budget status, and key accomplishments.

PDG B-5 Monthly Webinar

Join us for the next PDG B-5 Stakeholder webinar on **Tuesday, February 27, 2024**, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can [access the webinar](#) in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

For questions about the stakeholder webinar series, or suggestions for topics in future webinars, email us at Childhood@dese.mo.gov.

Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

[Visit the OOC webpage to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.](#)

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